

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the present amendment and comments herein.

Claims 1-3 and 12-14 have been amended. It is respectfully requested that claims 1-3 and 12-14 are no longer rejectable under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Additionally, since claims 12 and 14 are no longer rejectable under 35 U.S.C. § 112, claims 12 and 14 are allowable.

US 6,312,012 to Bohn, et al. ("Bohn") does not disclose a plurality of guides for guiding displacement of a covering cap, said guides being provided in a region of said edge of said covering cap, said guides being arranged and elastically mounted such that, upon laterally pressing down said covering cap for said predetermined distance by a force suitable for actuating a horn, said guides are tilted by an amount allowed by a yielding of said foam casing. Bohn does not disclose that upon laterally pressing down a covering cap for a predetermined distance by a force suitable for actuating a horn, guides are tilted by an amount allowed by a yielding of a foam casing. A person of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that flange 11 and screw 12 of Bohn prevent tilting and axial movement of bolt 10 of Bohn. Accordingly, Bohn does not disclose the guides recited in claim 1.

Moreover, the Office Action defines tilt as "to forge with a tilt hammer." To use a tilt hammer on a steering wheel does not constitute a common custom and thus, cannot define the commonly used meaning of the term "to tilt" with respect

to handling gas bag modules and actuating the horn in a steering wheel. The more appropriate and common meaning of "to tilt" for the instant application is: "to cause to slope or to move or shift so as to lean or incline," see Webster's third new International Dictionary.

Additionally, the amendment filed on July 30, 2003 cited in the Office Action should not be interpreted as an admission that the bolts in Bohn tilt. The emphasis made by the Office Action refers to the mounting tab 17 of Bohn, which is placed on the head of the bolt 10 and can tilt around the bolt 10. However, the bolt is still in a fixed axial direction and provides a fixed abutment for the mounting tab 17 to tilt about.

The Office Action also states that Bohn, col. 3, lines 42-46 disclose titling bolts. However, Bohn actually discloses that a mounting tab 17 which rests on the head of bolts 10 may be tilted. Bohn does not disclose that the bolts may tilt.

The Office Action also states that Bohn's casing 6 is made of foamed material and it therefore flexible. The fact that Bohn's casing is made of a foamed material does not necessarily imply that it is flexible enough so that bolts 10, provided with an extremely large area of contact and braced against movement by a screw 12 will move a noticeable amount when force is transmitted to them by pressing on the covering cap 6 to actuate the horn. Additionally, the Office Action states that Bohn's casing 6 and guides 10, 26 are integrally connected. However, as shown in Fig. 3 of Bohn, the covering

cap 6 rests via sleeve 25' on the head of bolt 25. Thus, Bohn's casing 6 and guides 10, 26 are not integrally connected.

Further, the Office Action states that Bohn's flange 11 and washer 13 are similar to the flange of the instant application's bearing bushing 42. However, the flange 11 and screw 12 in Bohn secure the bolt 10 against movement. In contrast, Fig. 5 of the instant application, bushing 42 extends only a short part over the lateral dimensions of recess 50. Once again, Bohn does not disclose that the bolt may tilt.

The Office Action also states that Bohn's cover cap 6 and studs 10 or 26 are similar to the instant Application's cover cap 26 and studs 32. However, in Bohn, when Bohn's edge 24 of Bohn's covering cap 5 is depressed, the sleeve 25' which rests on the head of bolt 10 will tilt around the head of bolt 10. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that even a force only slightly deviating from the axial direction will tilt the cover cap 6 of Bohn, around the bolt 10 without tilting the bolt. Accordingly, Bohn discloses bolts that are not meant to tilt when suitable forces are applied for actuating a horn.

Thus, claim 1 should be allowed.

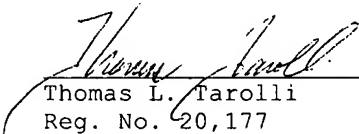
Claims 2-11 depend from claim 1 and define over the patent to Bohn for the same reasons as claim 1 and for the specific limitations recited therein. Claims 2-11 constitute further limitations to allowable claim 1. Thus, claims 2-11 should be allowed.

Claim 13 recites guides being arranged and elastically mounted such that, upon laterally pressing down a covering cap for a predetermined distance by a force suitable for actuating the horn, the guides are tilted by an amount allowed by a yielding of said foam casing. For the above reasons relating to claim 1, claim 13 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 1, 2, 4a, 4b, and 5. The shading for plastic for the housing (16) has been shown in Figs. 1, 2, 4a, 4b, and 5. The shading for foam for the foam casing (12) has been shown in Figs. 1 and 2. No new matter has been added. Further, reference numerals 62 and 64 have not been added to Fig. 1 because the specification does not support such an amendment.

Attachment: Replacement formal drawing sheets 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. (Original Sheet 3 remains in this application and no changes have been made to original sheet 3.)

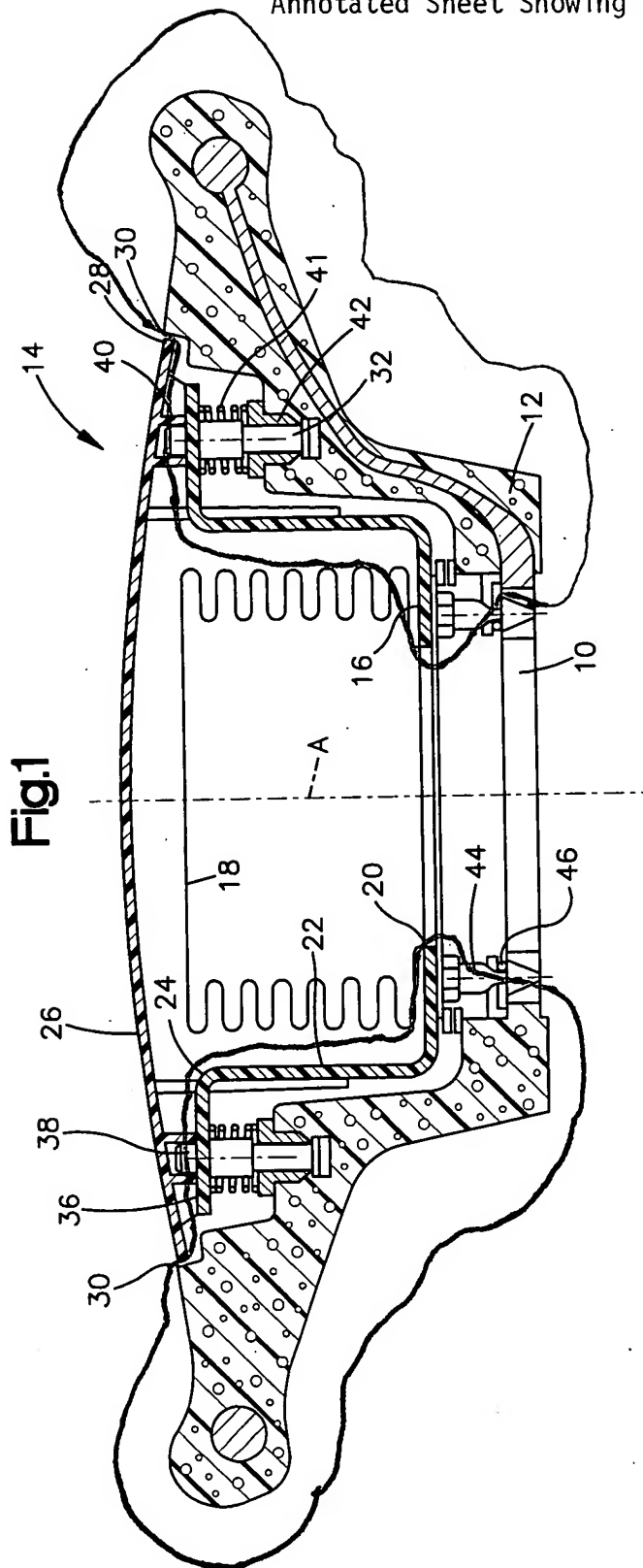


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Annotated Sheet Showing Changes



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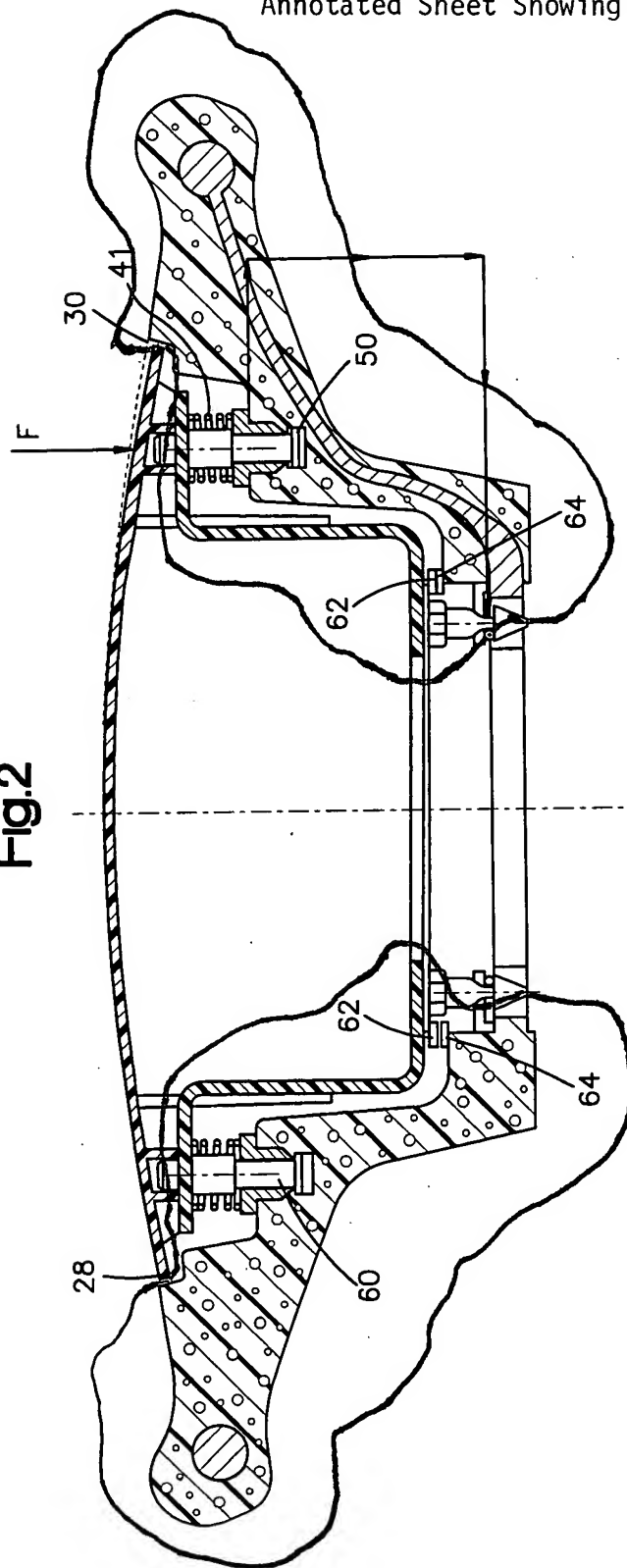
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Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

Fig.2

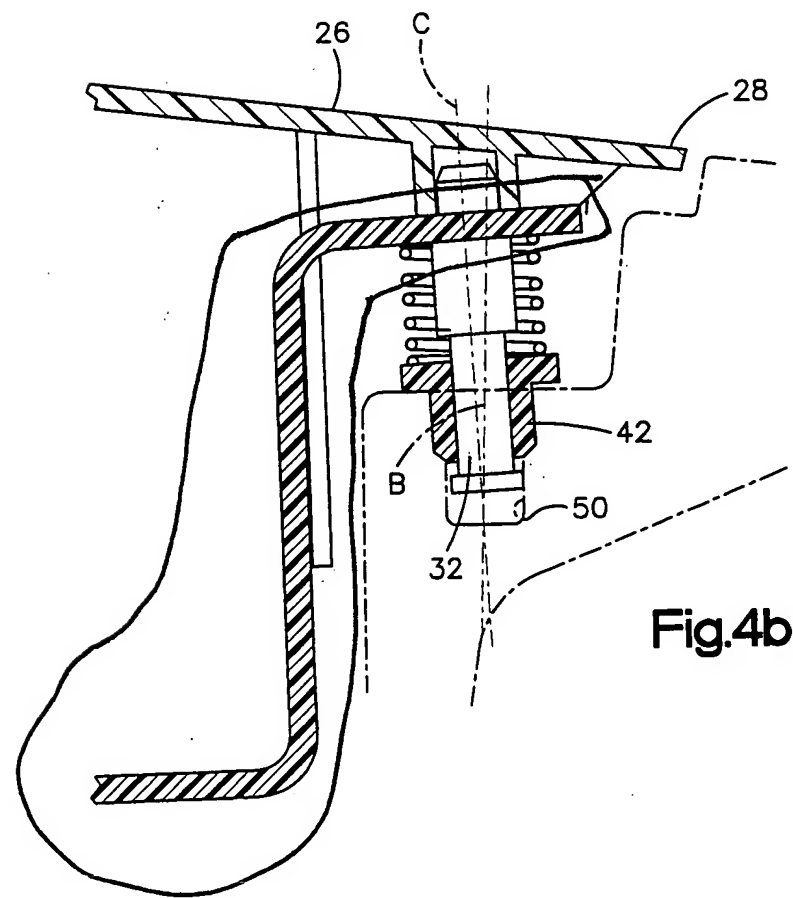
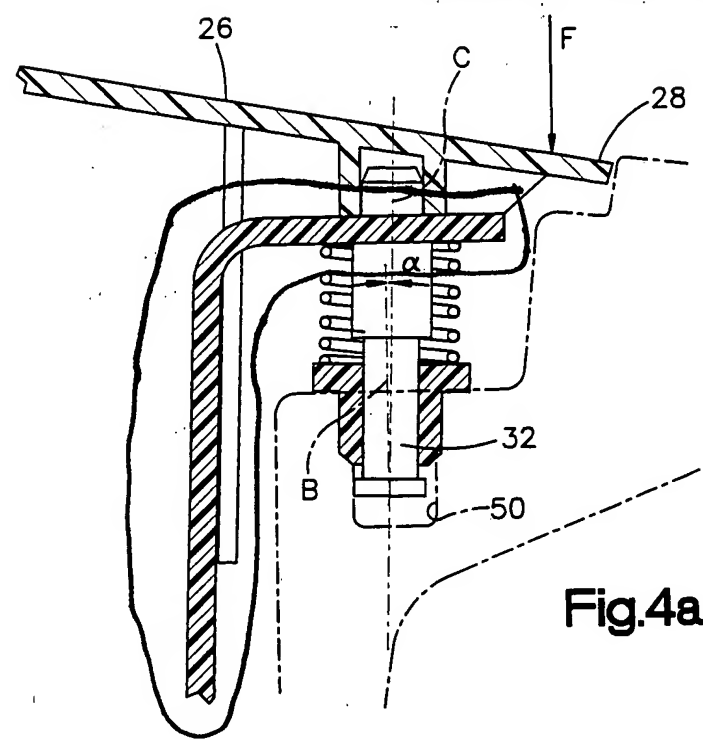


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Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

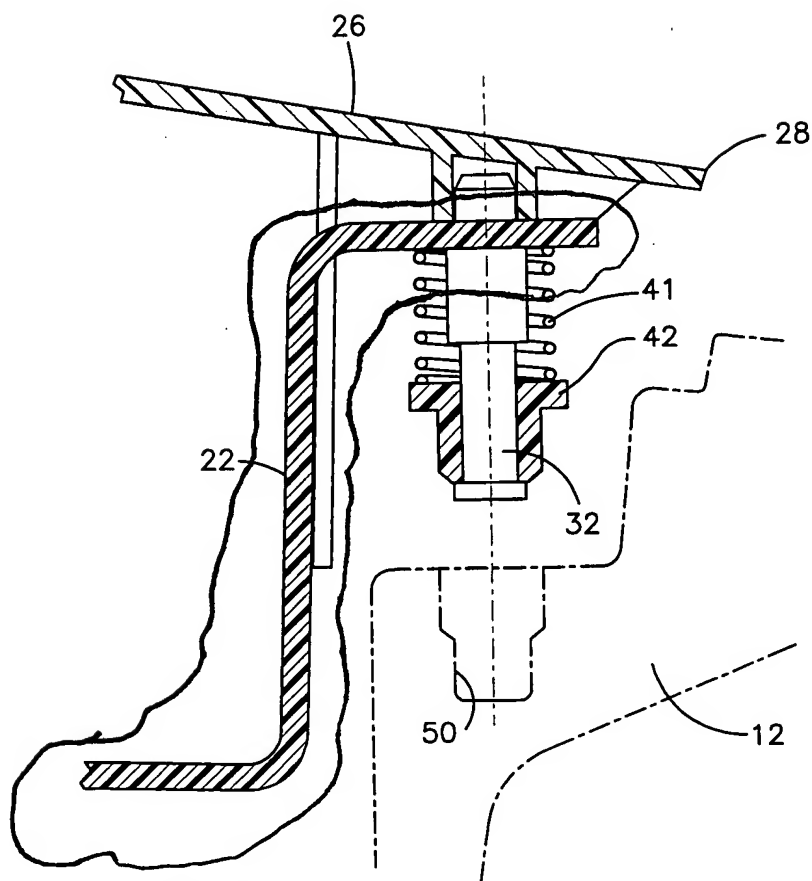


Fig.5